

In Community

AN EAU CLAIRE AREA ELCA SERIES ON
WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CHURCH TOGETHER
AND WITH ALL OF GOD'S CREATION



Ash Wednesday

On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, let us also remember that we are called to be in community with all of creation and all of our neighbors as we live out our baptismal promises.

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

In Simon Sinek's 2011 best seller *Start With Why*, he seeks to understand why some people, movements, businesses, and organization are more influential and more innovative than others. He concludes that any organization or leader can explain what it does; some can explain how they do it; but very few can clearly articulate why. The same is of Jesus in this passage. Jesus isn't condemning prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, Jesus is really talking about disposition of the heart, he is talking about the why of each person.

Reflection Questions

- Lent is often thought of as a time to reorient oneself to God. What sort of activities might you take on for this season? Will you give something up or commit to a new practice?
- Our theme for the Lenten midweek series is "In Community." How might you be in community with others as a way in which to grow in faith?
- If you are a fan of movies, check out *Blues Brothers*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, or *Zootopia* and consider how these films have characters that turn from a previous way of life or overcome adversity to live anew.